

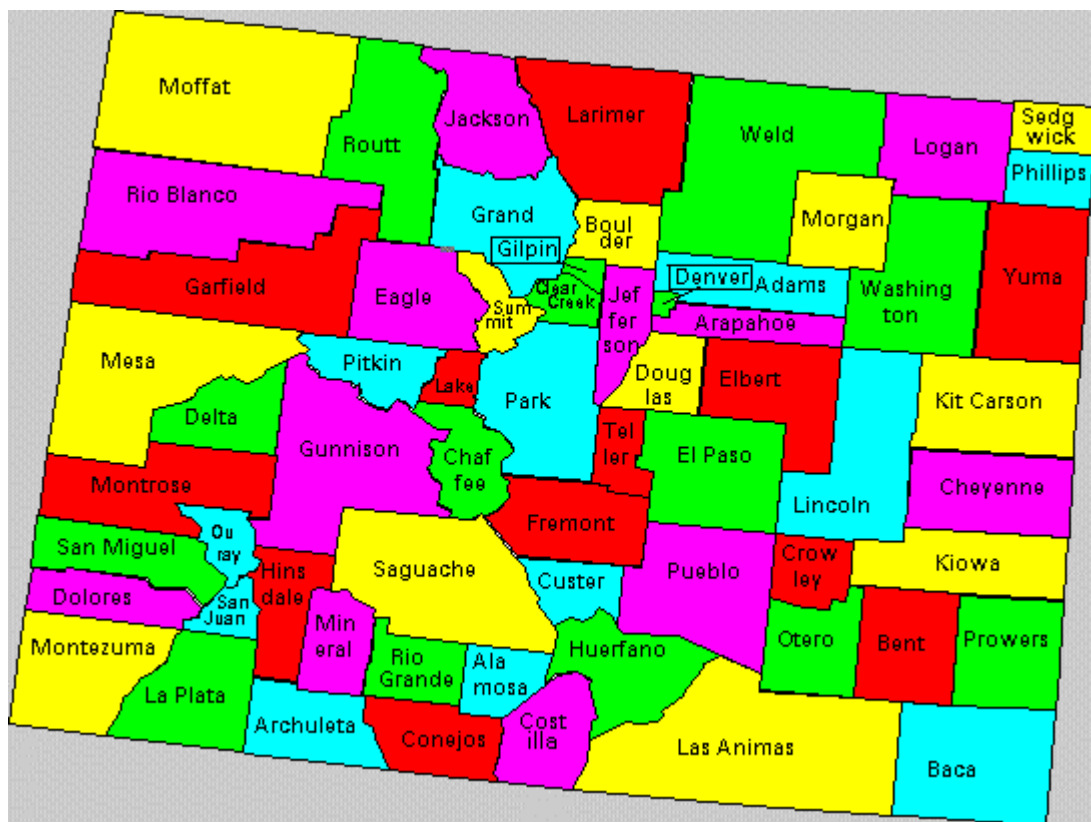
# Office of National Drug Control Policy

## Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

### State of Colorado

#### Profile of Drug Indicators

September 1999



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

## **Colorado**

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

### **Demographics<sup>1</sup>**

- Population: 3,294,394 (1990 census), 3,971,000 (1998 estimate)
- Gender breakdown: 49.5% male, 51.5% female.
- Age Breakdown: 26.2% were under 18 years old, 10.0% were 65 years and older
- Racial breakdown: 88.1% White, 4% Black, 5.1% Other race, 1.8% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% American Indian, Eskimo or Aleut.
- Percent of Population Below Poverty Level: 13.7%

### **Political<sup>2</sup>**

- U.S. Senators of Colorado: Ben Nighthorse Campbell (R), Wayne A. Allard (R).
- U.S. Representatives of Colorado: Diana DeGette (D), Mark Udall (D), Scott McInnis (R), Bob Schaffer (R), Joel Hefley (R), Dan Schaefer (R), Thomas Gerard Tancredo (R)
- Governor of Colorado: Bill Owens
- Attorney General: Ken Salazar
- Executive Director, Colorado Department of Public Safety: Aristedes Zavaras
- Director, Colorado Bureau of Investigation: Carl W. Whiteside
- Director, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division: Janet Wood

### **Programs/Initiatives**

- Three community coalitions in Colorado were awarded funds from the FY98 Drug-Free Community Support Program. The coalitions are:
  - The Ouray County Schools Community Resource Consortium (OCSCRC)* will target young people ages 10 through 15. The grant will help OCSCRC, a partnership of youth service providers and parents, reduce youth drug use through activities already underway, such as the volunteer-run Ouray County Summer Recreation and Education Program that provides county youth with six weeks of supervised fun and learning-filled adventures.
  - Mesa County Health Department* is a part of the Build A Generation Initiative, which targets youth ages 10 to 18 in the Grand Valley Community, located in western Colorado.
  - The Grand Futures Prevention Coalition* is a private, nonprofit agency formed in 1990 as a grassroots coalition of three community partnerships in rural counties of northwestern Colorado. This area is large and predominantly rural, but includes major ski areas, Rocky Mountain National Park, and other attractions that draw many tourists to the area and present the area with some unique substance abuse prevention challenges. The coalition's mission has been to provide a framework for communities to create and promote healthy lifestyles as an alternative to substance abuse.<sup>3</sup>

- The Rocky Mountain HIDTA, designated in 1996, is increasingly populated with Mexican drug trafficking organizations and violent gangs using this major transportation crossroads as a trans-shipment center. Law enforcement officials in the Rocky Mountain heartland of America have documented large loads of illegal drugs entering Denver via airports and being distributed to cities via major highways through Utah and Wyoming, as well as a pattern of seizing illicit drugs bound for the East Coast and money bound for the West Coast. In addition, methamphetamine trafficking is increasing in the area as record amounts of the drug are smuggled across the Southwest Border and transit Colorado, Utah, and Wyoming en route to other cities.  
The Rocky Mountain HIDTA encompasses Adams, Arapahoe, Denver, Douglas, Eagle, El Paso, Garfield, Jefferson, La Plata, and Mesa counties in Colorado; Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, Utah, and Weber counties in Utah; and Laramie, Natrona, and Sweetwater counties in Wyoming.<sup>4</sup>
- Project Storefront was designed to provide a visible, non-threatening activity center for resident and community outreach, communication, and program activities. The goals of Project Storefront were to eliminate drugs and drug-related crimes in Denver Housing Authority's (DHA) public housing communities, and to improve quality of life for residents. DHA's strategy emphasized their commitment to have input from all interested community representatives, and to build communication and dissolve any misunderstandings between the Police Department and residents.<sup>5</sup>
- Denver introduced the SafeNite Curfew and Diversion Program in 1994 to reduce the number of youth perpetrators and victims, and court congestion. A municipal ordinance makes it unlawful for youth under age 18 to be in a public place from 11 p.m. to 5 a.m. (Sun.-Thurs.), and 12:00 a.m. to 5 a.m. (Fri.-Sat.). Youth violating only the curfew ordinance (i.e., but no other criminal laws) are taken by police to a SafeNite location where they are ticketed by police. Their parents/guardian are called to the site, and an on-site counselor conducts interviews to identify needed services and to address family issues. Completion of specified diversion programming results in avoidance of a court appearance and ticket dismissal. For the period 1995 through 1997, 6,200 cases against youth have been dismissed because they completed diversion programs. Since 1994, the number of crime victims where the suspect was a juvenile dropped by 40 percent.<sup>6</sup>
- Since 1994, the Safe City Office annually distributes \$1 million to community organizations and individuals that provide prevention services aimed at reducing youth crime and violence. A review board and an allocation committee determine, on a competitive basis, finalist proposals that are recommended for funding. Successful applicants contract with the city and provide defined services. An independent evaluation firm assists contractors in developing an evaluation plan that specifies precise goals and objectives, and the firm monitors compliance and achievements. The 1998 programs will serve more than 6,000 youth and 10,000 families. Analysis of crime statistics revealed a city-wide decrease in juvenile arrests of 27% between 1993 and 1996. In addition, a poor and high-crime neighborhood with the greatest number of program participants, precinct number 612, achieved nearly a 40% reduction in juvenile arrests between 1995 and 1996.<sup>7</sup>

- The Denver Drug Court has been fully implemented since July 1994. This project achieved the goals of 1) alleviating court crowding by diverting 2,000 felony drug cases to the Drug Court and allowing other courts to dedicate more time to violent offenders; and, 2) alleviating incarceration in local jails and the correctional system by reducing the time between arrest and disposition to 90 days. Incarceration (track 3) is used for violent offenders who have engaged in drug dealing or their record reflects a high risk to public safety.

The Denver Drug Court, which uses both diversion and probation models of drug courts, is an integrated system whose function is to test offenders, classify those with substance abuse problems according to standardized objective measures, and match offenders with a level and type of treatment and sanction appropriate for their treatment needs and criminal risks. Components that facilitate an expeditious case process are: All drug cases managed in one courtroom with one judge. Consistent team of players who make a commitment to serve the Drug Court for either one year (judge, district attorney, public defenders) or two years (probation officers).

Commitment from the Drug Court Advisory Committee to meet a minimum of once a month for the first year and then bimonthly. Subcommittees meet in the off months.

Early intervention, assessment, and the appropriate match of offenders' needs and services through motivational interviewing and the administration of the Adult Substance Use Survey (ASUS), Level of Supervision Inventory (LSI), and Substance Use History Matrix (SUHM).

Intermediate and innovative sanctions designed to address addiction and relapse in the most effective manner.

Integral involvement of the court through a process of frequent court appearances and the court's immediate access to treatment information provided by an automated management information system located in close proximity to the bench.<sup>8</sup>

### Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- Of the 13,024 arrests for drug abuse violations in 1997 2,345 involved people under the age of 18.<sup>9</sup>

#### Arrests in the State of Colorado 1995-1997

Offense	1995	1996	1997
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	148	113	108
Forcible rape	399	454	502
Robbery	704	590	563
Aggravated assault	4,360	4,054	3,748
Burglary	2,893	2,469	2,120
Larceny-theft	26,509	20,716	19,511
Motor vehicle theft	1,734	1,379	1,598
Arson	246	282	186
<b>Drug abuse violations</b>	<b>12,722</b>	<b>12,950</b>	<b>13,024</b>
Driving under the influence	13,425	29,599	16,393
Liquor laws	10,182	17,676	13,435
Drunkenness	453	880	92

- In Colorado during 1998 68.8% of male arrestees and 68.7% of female arrestees tested positive for drugs at the time of their arrest.<sup>10</sup>

Percent of Adult Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs by Offense, Colorado 1998

Offense	Cocaine		Marijuana		Meth		PCP		Any Drug	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
<b>Violent</b>	25.8	24.4	37.1	31.4	1.1	0	0	0	54.8	44.2
<b>Property</b>	40.3	54.1	37	25.7	4.4	2.7	0	0	66.3	68.9
<b>Drug</b>	53.4	65.8	49	37	11.8	17.8	0	0	86.5	93.2
<b>Prostitution</b>	42.9	88.9	14.3	16.7	0	0	0	0	42.9	94.4
<b>Other</b>	38	50	40.6	29.3	2.1	2.4	0	0	65.1	67.7
<b>Total</b>	39.6	49.9	41.3	29.9	5.2	4.6	0	0	68.8	68.7

## Drugs

Ethnographers and Epidemiologists report on drug use in Denver, Winter 1998<sup>11</sup>

Category	Heroin	Cocaine	Marijuana
Use	Stable	Stable	Stable at high level
Who's Using	Mostly older; 60% male, 40% female; mostly Caucasian and Hispanic	Based on treatment admissions: mostly Caucasian users, 62% male, 92% over 25 years old	60% Caucasian; 72% males, 28% females; much younger group of users than other drugs
Prevalent Method of Use	Injection	Smoking, Snorting, Injection (decreasing)	
Drugs in Combination	Cocaine (speedball)	Heroin (very infrequently) Marijuana Methamphetamine	Alcohol Amphetamines
Who's Selling	Primarily Mexican Nationals; fewer street dealers, more beeper sales		All different groups
Price/Purity	\$120-160 per gram; \$750 per 1/2 ounce	\$80-100 per gram, \$200 per 1/8 ounce, \$900-\$1,300 per ounce	Large variability dependent upon quality; \$100-600 per ounce; \$700-5,000 per pound. Prices may have increased due to hydroponic growth

➤ Cocaine/Crack<sup>12</sup>

During 1995 a survey of Colorado residents was performed and 14% of the respondents reported using cocaine at least once in their lifetime. The numbers of cocaine treatment admissions have decreased from 40.5% of all admissions in 1994 to 28.4% of all admissions in 1997. Of all those admitted for cocaine treatment in 1997 66% reported smoking and 12.7% reported injection as the primary form of use. Most of those seeking treatment for cocaine in 1997 were white (46%), followed by African American (33.3%). The majority of cocaine admissions in 1997 were male (57.7%) and 26 years old or older (92%).

Crack cocaine is more available on the streets than powder cocaine, this has caused many users to "unrock" crack cocaine for injection. The use of crack in combination with methamphetamine has increased and some crack users have crossed over to methamphetamine. Street gangs in Denver dominate crack distribution.

➤ Heroin<sup>13</sup>

Of those surveyed in Colorado Alcohol and Drug Household Telephone Survey in 1995 1.2% reported using heroin at least once in their life. The number of heroin admissions fell slightly from 10.8% of all admissions in 1996 to 9.8% of all admissions in 1997. Smoking heroin is increasing in the Denver area and made up 3.5% of treatment admissions.

Mexican black tar is the dominant form of heroin being sold on the street. In Denver primarily Mexican Nationals control heroin sales. The average purity of heroin in Denver was 32%.

➤ Marijuana<sup>14</sup>

Marijuana was the mostly commonly reported drug used by Colorado residents in the 1995 Colorado Household Survey. Marijuana users accounted for 39.7% of all treatment admissions in 1997. Most marijuana users entering treatment were white (60%), male (72%), and the average age at first use was 14.

Marijuana is grown in Colorado and imported from other States and Mexico. The Denver DEA reported the price for a pound was \$800-\$1,200 for commercial grade marijuana and \$1,500-\$3,200 for sinsemilla.

➤ Methamphetamine<sup>15</sup>

Methamphetamine use has increased in Colorado, treatment admissions rose from 2.9% of all admissions in 1991 to 15.6% in 1997. Methamphetamine users admitted for treatment in 1997 were predominantly white (88%), male (52%), and nearly 39% were age 25 or younger. Methamphetamine is imported from California and Mexico into Colorado and local production has increased due to a higher demand.

Methamphetamine prices in Denver range from \$25 per quarter gram to \$900-\$1,200 per ounce. An eight ball (1/8 ounce) sells for \$200 and 1/16 an ounce for \$100-\$120.

## **Juveniles**

- The percent of Colorado high school students that tried marijuana (46.1%) was slightly lower than the national figure (47.1%), however the percent of Colorado high school students that were considered current marijuana (27.9%) users was higher than the national figure (26.2%).<sup>16</sup>

Percent of Colorado High School Students Drug Use, 1997

Drug & Frequency	Female	Male	Total
Marijuana Lifetime (1)	43.5%	48.9%	46.1%
Marijuana Current (2)	25.2%	30.7%	27.9%
Cocaine Lifetime	13.8%	10.7%	12.3%
Cocaine Current	4.1%	5.4%	4.7%
Crack Lifetime	8.7%	6.0%	7.4%
Steroid Lifetime	3.9%	4.9%	4.5%
Injected Lifetime (3)	2.4%	3.5%	3.0%
Other Lifetime (4)	25.3%	24.9%	25.1%
Inhalants Lifetime	20.1%	20.2%	20.1%

1. Lifetime-Used drug at least once in their lifetime
2. Current- Used drug once or more in last 30 days
3. Used a needle to inject drugs
4. Other drugs include LSD, PCP, methamphetamine, and heroin

- During 1998 62.2% of juvenile male arrestees in Denver tested positive for drugs.<sup>17</sup>

Percent of Juvenile Male Arrestees Testing Positive for Drugs by Offense, Denver 1998

Offense	Cocaine	Marijuana	Meth	Any Drug
<b>Violent</b>	5.3	40	0	42.7
<b>Property</b>	8	54	0	57
<b>Drug</b>	23.3	88.4	0	90.7
<b>Other</b>	15	62.2	1.3	65.2
<b>Total</b>	12.6	59.3	.7	62.2

**Trafficking and Seizures**

- Colorado is centrally located within the United States and has two major highways running through it (I-70 and I-25). Interstate I-80 also runs less than ten miles from Colorado's northern border. These highways serve as transportation through and to Colorado for major drug shipments. Also, within Colorado there are 2 major airports (Colorado Springs and Denver International Airport) that have high instances of drug trafficking. In addition, there are many small, unsecured airstrips located in Colorado that are utilized to bring in large amounts of drugs into the State.<sup>18</sup>
- During 1998 the Rocky Mountain HIDTA was responsible for the seizure of 16,572.6 pounds of marijuana.<sup>19</sup>

Rocky Mountain HIDTA Seizures FY 1998	
Methamphetamine	480.6 pounds
Cocaine	484.7 pounds
Marijuana	16,572.6 pounds
Heroin	17.8 pounds
Assets Seized	\$9,088,971
Weapons Seized	573
Clandestine Labs Seized	259 (225 in Utah)

- During 1998 the State of Colorado eradicated 116,027 marijuana plants under the DEA's Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program.<sup>20</sup>

<b>Domestic Cannabis Eradication Program, Colorado 1998</b>	
<b>OUTDOOR</b>	
Eradicated Plots	77
Cultivated Plants Eradicated	3,031
Ditchweed Eradicated	107,778
<b>INDOOR</b>	
Grows Seized	78
Plants Eradicated	5,218
<b>TOTAL</b>	
Plants Eradicated	116,027
Number of Arrests	294
Weapons Seized	4,108
Assets Seized	\$1,182,536

### **Consequences of Use**

- The number of drug-related emergency department episodes rose from 3,419 in 1996 to 4,338 in 1997. Preliminary data for 1998 shows 3,673 drug episodes in Denver.<sup>21</sup>

### **Drug-Related Emergency Room Episodes and Mentions in Denver, 1996-1998\***

	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>1998</b>
Drug Episodes	3,419	4,338	2,102
Drug Mentions	5,916	7,538	3,673
Cocaine	811	1,072	516
Heroin/Morphine	344	476	262
Marijuana/Hashish	288	505	301
Methamphetamine	105	292	68

\*Preliminary data for January through June 1998 only

- The number of drug-related deaths in Denver remained the same at 102 for both 1995 and 1996.<sup>22</sup>

#### Drug Abuse Deaths in Denver, 1995-96

<b>Selected Characteristics</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>
Total drug-abuse episodes	102	102
<b>GENDER</b>		
Male	72	75
Female	28	26
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>		
White	66	58
Black	14	11
Hispanic	19	30
Other	0	3
Unknown/ No response	3	0
<b>AGE</b>		
6-17	0	1
18-25	6	8
26-34	24	27
35 and up	72	66
<b>SELECTED DRUGS</b>		
Alcohol-in-comb	48	36
Cocaine	37	55
Heroin/Morphine	53	30
Marijuana/Hashish	1	1
Methadone	9	4
Methamphetamine	3	3
<b>Total Drug Mentions</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>187</b>

#### Courts

- Of the 561 Federal defendants in Colorado during FY 1997 36.9% of them were charged with a drug-related offenses. The most common drug offense was drug trafficking (32.8% of total). The most common drug involved was heroin (28.4%), followed by powder cocaine (24.5%), crack (21.5%), methamphetamine (13.2%), and marijuana (10.2%).<sup>23</sup>

#### Corrections

- On June 30th, 1998 there were 13,960 inmates under correctional authorities of the State of Colorado. This is a rise of 8.7% from 12,480 inmates at the same time during 1997. On January 1, 1997 the State of Colorado had 975 inmates in drug treatment programs. In 1996 Colorado completed 6,000 drug tests on Inmates. Colorado also uses 4 drug dogs in its prisons to detect contraband.<sup>24</sup>

- Colorado is currently running a Juvenile Offender Substance Abuse Treatment Project. The program target youth brought to detention whose score on a substance abuse survey (given to each juvenile at intake) indicates a need for further assessment and educational/treatment alternatives.<sup>25</sup>

## Treatment

- On October 1, 1997 143 treatment facilities in Colorado were treating 13,530 clients. Of the total number of clients 32.4% were receiving treatment for both alcohol and drug abuse problems, 31.8% of them were receiving treatment for a drug abuse problem alone, and 35.8% for only alcohol abuse.<sup>26</sup>

## Sources

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

<sup>2</sup> State of Colorado web site at [www.state.co.us/](http://www.state.co.us/)

<sup>3</sup> ONDCP Web site: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, *Celebrate the Spirit of Success: Briefs of 91 Best Practices*, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> National Crime Prevention Coalition web site at [www.ncpc.org/denver.htm](http://www.ncpc.org/denver.htm)

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Drug Court Program Office web site at [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/dcpo/](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/dcpo/)

<sup>9</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 1997*, November 1998

<sup>10</sup> National Institute of Justice, *1998 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Adult and Juvenile Arrestees*, April 1998

<sup>11</sup> ONDCP, *Pulse Check: National Trends in Drug Abuse, Winter 1998*, 1998

<sup>12</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse, *Epidemiologic Trends in Drug Abuse, Volume II: Proceedings June 1998*, January 1999

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Center for Disease Control, *Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance - United States, 1997*, August 1998

<sup>17</sup> National Institute of Justice, *1998 Annual Report on Drug Use Among Adult and Juvenile Arrestees*, April 1998

<sup>18</sup> State of Colorado, Office of Drug Control and System Improvement, *Colorado 1997 Statewide Strategy for Drug & Violent Crime Control*, 1997

<sup>19</sup> Rocky Mountain HIDTA, *Rocky Mountain HIDTA, 1998 Annual Report*, 1999

<sup>20</sup> Drug Enforcement Administration, *Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program Statistical Report, 1998*, March 1999

<sup>21</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Mid-Year 1998 Preliminary Emergency Department Data from the Drug Abuse Warning Network*, July 1999

<sup>22</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Drug Abuse Warning Network, Annual Medical Examiner Data, 1996*, July 1998

<sup>23</sup> United States Sentencing Commission Web site: <http://www.ussc.gov/>

<sup>24</sup> Corrections Program Office, *State Efforts to Reduce Substance Abuse Among Offenders*, October 1998

<sup>25</sup> Bureau of Justice Assistance, *Programs in Correctional Settings: Innovative State and Local Programs*, June 1998.

<sup>26</sup> Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Uniform Facility Data Set (UFDS) - Data on Substance Abuse Treatment Facilities*, June 1999

This State Profile was prepared by the ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse. The Clearinghouse is funded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and is a component of the [National Criminal Justice Reference Service](#) For further information concerning the contents of this profile or other drug policy issues contact:

The Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse  
PO Box 6000  
Rockville, MD 20849-6000  
1-800-666-3332  
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>  
[ondcp@ncjrs.org](mailto:ondcp@ncjrs.org)

